

cricket

DISRUPTOR

CES

2013

DAILY

ISSUE 73.4

DISTRO CES 2013 DAILY 01.11.13

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Will Lipman for Distro
Outside the Engadget Trailer
in the LVCC Parking Lot



— THE WORLD'S —
BIGGEST CHALLENGES
DESERVE EVEN
BIGGER SOLUTIONS

{ POWERFUL ANSWERS }

FIND OUT MORE



verizon

WINDING DOWN

**CES
2013**

DISTRO

01.11.13



EDITOR'S LETTER

And just like that, we're through. It feels like just yesterday I was sitting down to write the introduction to a CES column for our first special issue of Distro from the show floor, and now, well, it's over. The show was different this year, but not necessarily in the way we expected. While the show felt smaller in a lot of ways, in many others it was even bigger.

Some big companies like Microsoft and RIM opted to have minimal or no presence on the show floor, so we thought that would shrink the overall content at CES. Oh no, dear readers, if anything it had quite the opposite effect. Those big voids that were created were filled by dozens of smaller companies, crowd-funded and fresh-thinking, lobbing plenty of innovative products our way. Some were crap, but lots and lots were awesome and mind-blowing in their simplicity and genius.

I leave this show feeling genuinely encouraged. We're facing a tectonic shift in the industry now as traditional concepts of product de-

velopment and production are turned on their head. Entrepreneurs no longer need to sell their souls to those with bankrolls to get a great idea off the ground. And, with the array of amazing consumer 3D printers we saw this week, prototyping and developing those ideas is easier and cheaper than ever.

I also feel incredibly proud after spending a great week with the Engadget team. CES is an exhausting and trying experience, and to bring a team that is as big and diverse as ours and to basically lock them in a trailer for a week in the midst of all this hell is asking a lot. But we got through with flying colors. Everyone is smiling and I certainly am too.

I hope you enjoyed all the CES coverage that we were able to bring to you, and I hope you're as eager as I am to see what 2013 has in store for us. Now, if you'll forgive me, I'm going to go kick off a hell

of a party with the entire Engadget CES crew. We certainly have some celebrating to do. 

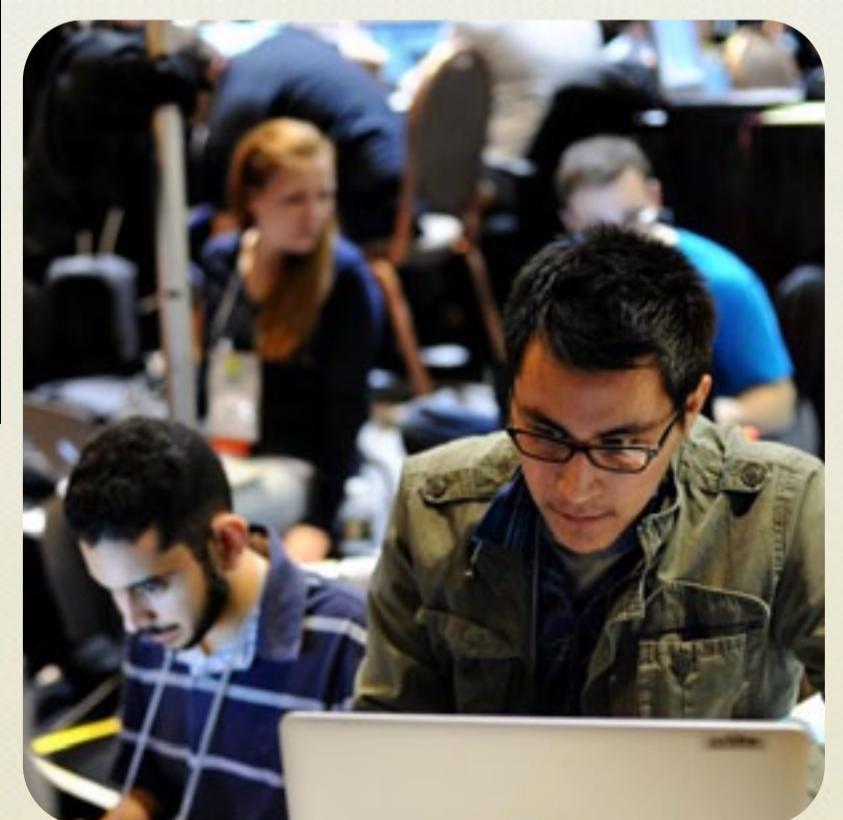
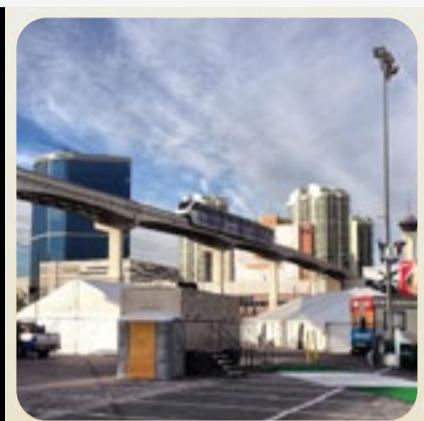


TIM STEVENS
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF,
ENGADGET

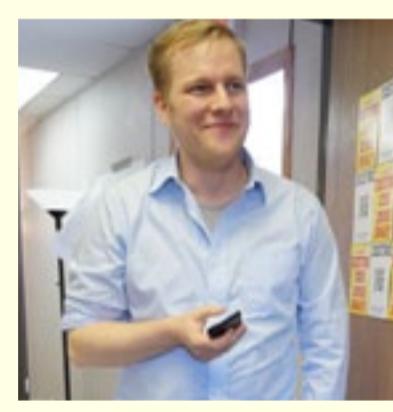
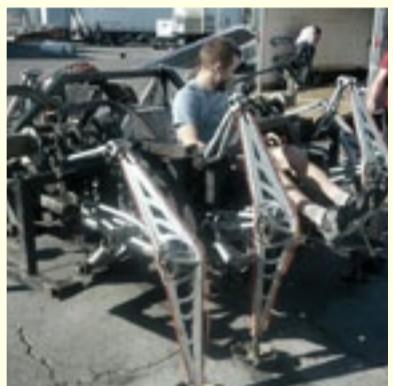


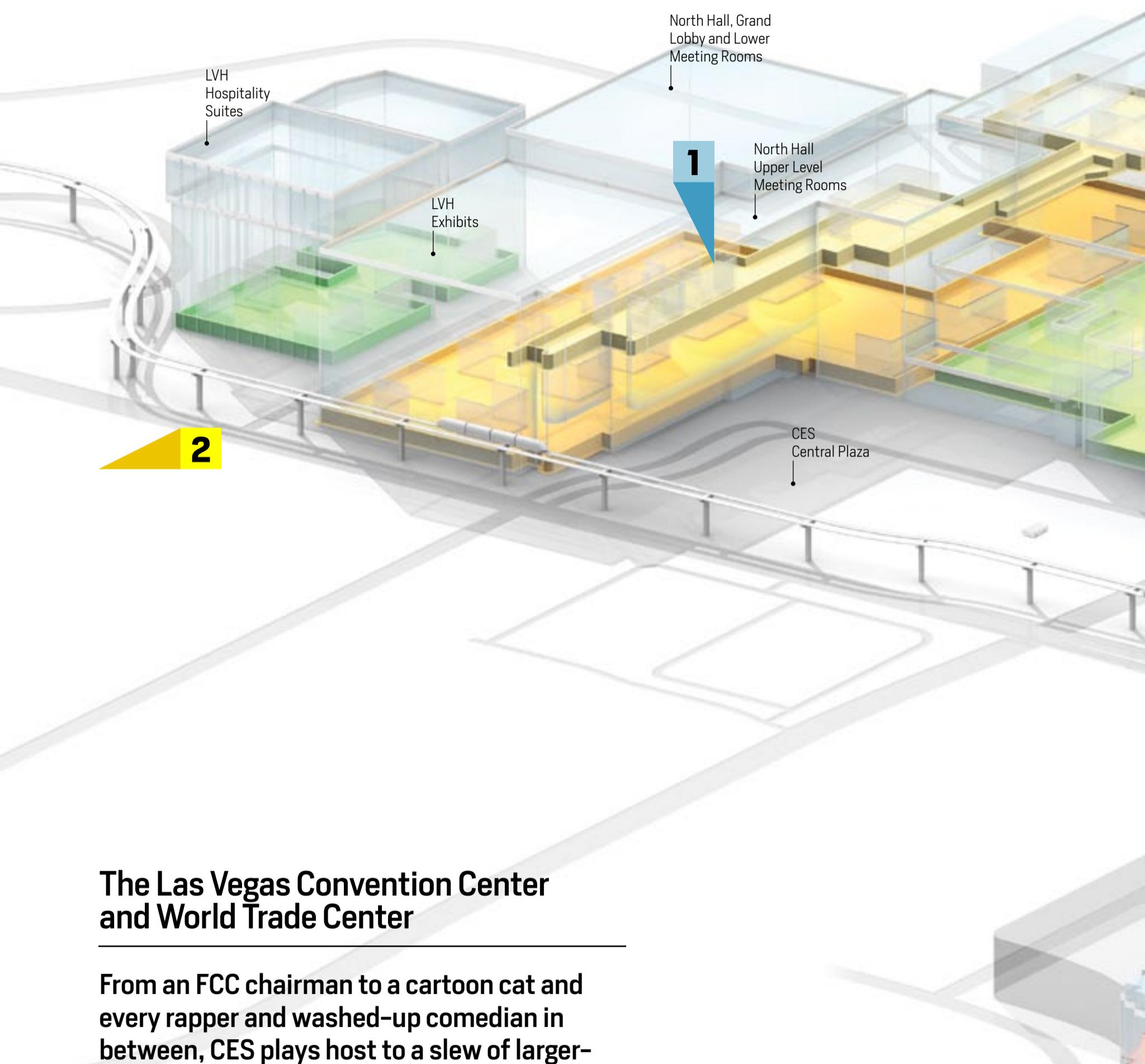
#DISTROGRAM

It was the best of weeks, it was the worst of weeks. We've lived a lifetime — again — and managed to pull together a few shots of our team, our memes and the world as we saw it from Distro HQ. We've seen one Engadget editor hit by a car (and survive), drank our combined weight in coffee — don't do the math — and, as always, critiqued Snooki's often questionable taste in footwear. Until 2014, here's a peak at the madness.









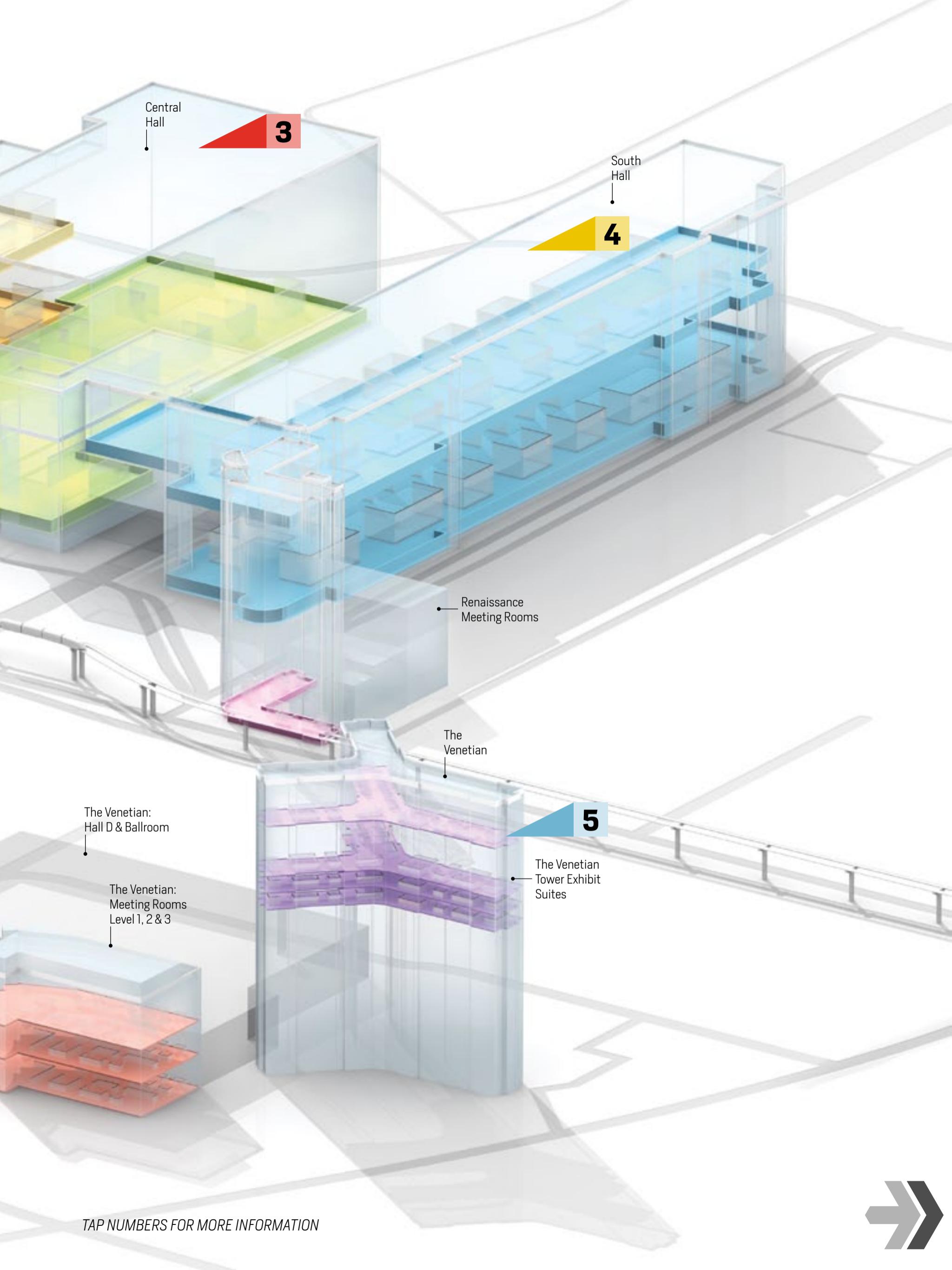
The Las Vegas Convention Center and World Trade Center

From an FCC chairman to a cartoon cat and every rapper and washed-up comedian in between, CES plays host to a slew of larger-than-life characters. Of course, the humans (in costume or otherwise) aren't the main attraction here. We've managed to survive long enough to bring you the rest of the best from the far reaches of Sin City.

ILLUSTRATION BY BRYAN CHRISTIE DESIGN

TAP NUMBERS FOR MORE INFORMATION





CES2013

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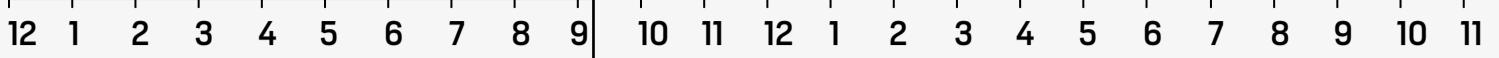
73.3

73.4

Give us your hungover, your overworked, your blistered feet. Actually, don't — we've had our fill. If you've spent any time at CES, you're likely ready for a 24-hour nap and a nice long bath, and we can relate. If you haven't, please enjoy this, our last batch of dispatches from the show floor (this time with 100 percent fewer 4K TVs).

PEBBLE
SMARTWATCH
NVIDIA TEGRA 4
TABLET
ROBOTEX AVATAR
MICROSOFT
SURFACE PRO
LG SMART
ACTIVITY
TRACKER
NUANCE
WINTERMUTE





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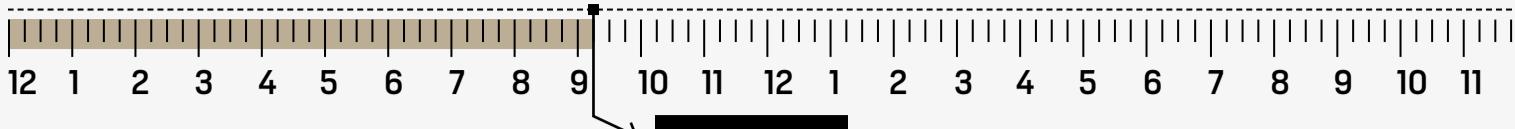
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**PRICE**
\$149**AVAILABILITY**
Late January
2013**FIRST
IMPRESSION**
The Kickstarter
darling
impresses just
days away from
its official ship
date.

PEBBLE SMARTWATCH

We spent some time with Pebble's smartwatch in Las Vegas this week and came away extremely impressed with the level of polish the company has achieved. Pebble's most visually striking feature is its colorful multi-layer polycarbonate face / bezel, which looks fantastic. The device is incredibly light (just 38.2g / 1.35oz) but still manages to feel solid. Build-quality is top-notch — Allerta's clearly put a lot of care into the hardware. The sides and back are black and completely sealed (Pebble is water-resistant to five atmospheres). On the right side, you'll find the up, select and down buttons, while the left side is home to the back button and a magnetic power connector, à la MagSafe. Speaking of which, battery life is rated for





01.09.2013

9:15AM



a lofty seven days per charge.

The smartwatch is equipped with a 1.26-inch backlit e-paper display (144 x 168 pixels, black and white) that's easy to read despite its low resolution. Under the hood, there's a Bluetooth 4.0 radio, vibration motor, accelerometer and compass, which enable some interesting new functionality. For example, just tapping the bezel above the armband lights up the screen. We found Pebble's UI simple and intuitive — the up and down buttons enable menu navigation, the select button lets you choose items and the

back button takes you up one level (and initially brings up the main menu). Allerta's done a great job at fine-tuning the software — scrolling is extremely fluid and the UI is pleasantly responsive.

In the main menu, you'll find three built-in watch faces, a music app, an alarm clock, the settings menu and a "get started" guide. Up to eight additional watch faces / apps can be pushed to the smartwatch over Bluetooth from a paired iOS or Android device running Allerta's companion app. Pebble can also receive SMS, email and other notifications. The music app turns the smartwatch into an AVRCP-compatible remote and the settings menu handles Bluetooth, time and display settings.

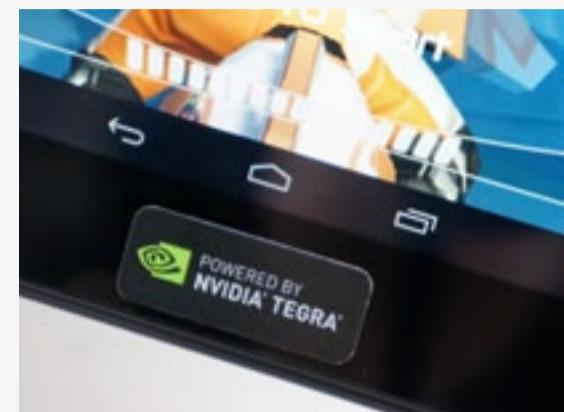
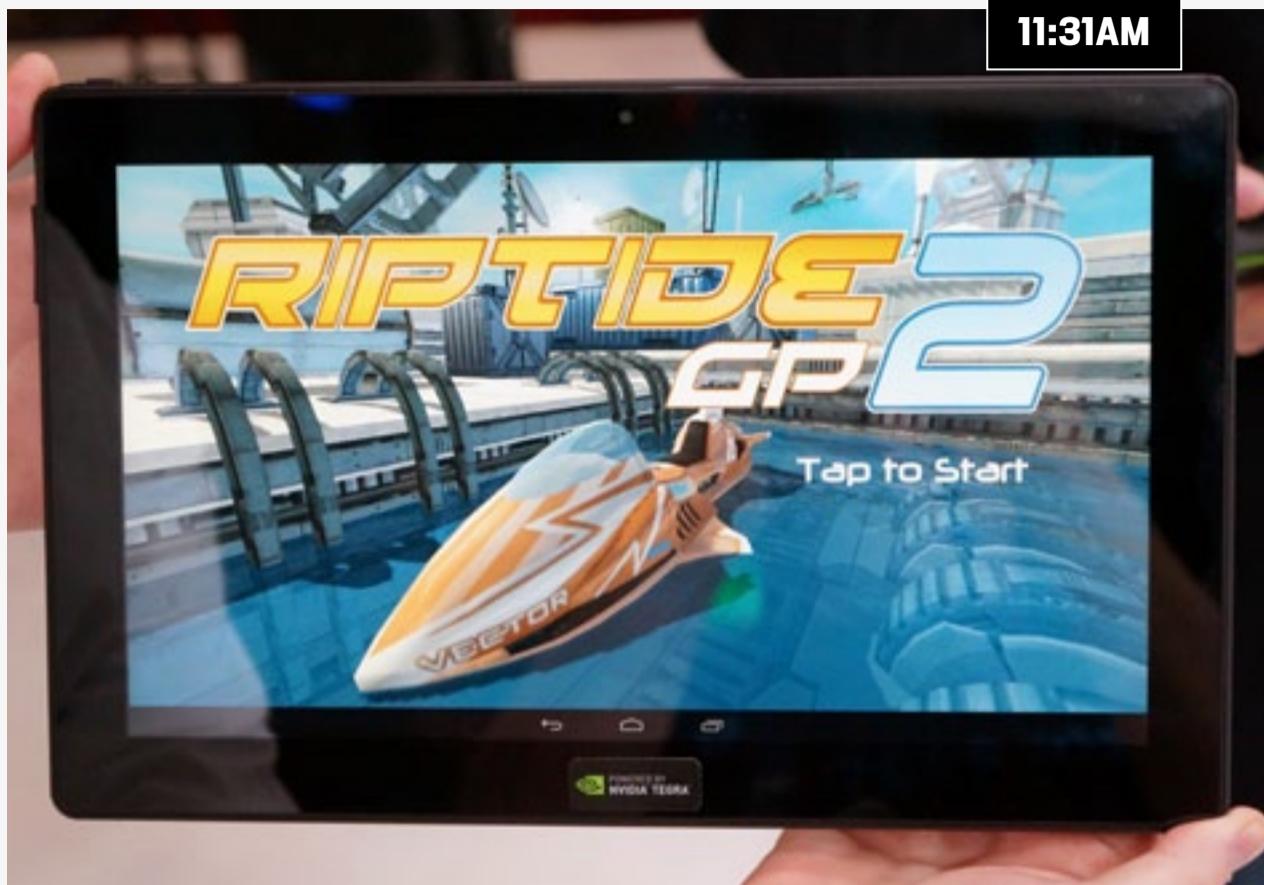
— Myriam Joire





01.09.2013

11:31AM

**PRICE**
N/A**AVAILABILITY**
N/A**FIRST
IMPRESSION**
Featherlight and lightning quick, it's a shame this tablet will never make it to market.

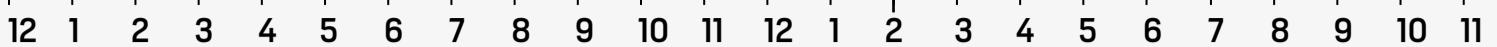
NVIDIA TEGRA 4 REFERENCE TABLET



During our on-stage broadcast with NVIDIA, while we got another look at Project Shield, we were also surprised by the appearance of NVIDIA's new Tegra 4 reference tablet. Previously out of reach over at the chipmaker's CES space, we got to exclusively handle it and play some *Riptide GP 2* (another first). The device — which won't ever make its way to consumers — was incredibly light, while the 16:9 11-inch display beamed out Android 4.2. There's a raft of ports for developers to meddle with, including micro-USB, HDMI and storage expansion, as well as some indentations for docks and fixtures.

In our hands, it's unerringly light — and the NVIDIA guys seemed pretty proud when we mentioned that. Performance on the game and basic navigations was unsurprisingly very slick — the game we tried was developed specifically for NVIDIA's new mobile chip. However, we weren't able to steal a glance at the web browser, but we're likely to see and hear a lot more next month at Mobile World Congress. — *Mat Smith*





PRICE
\$299

AVAILABILITY
On Sale Now

**FIRST
IMPRESSION**
RoboteX takes the roving avatar out of the federal security complex and puts it in your house.

ROBOTECH AVATAR



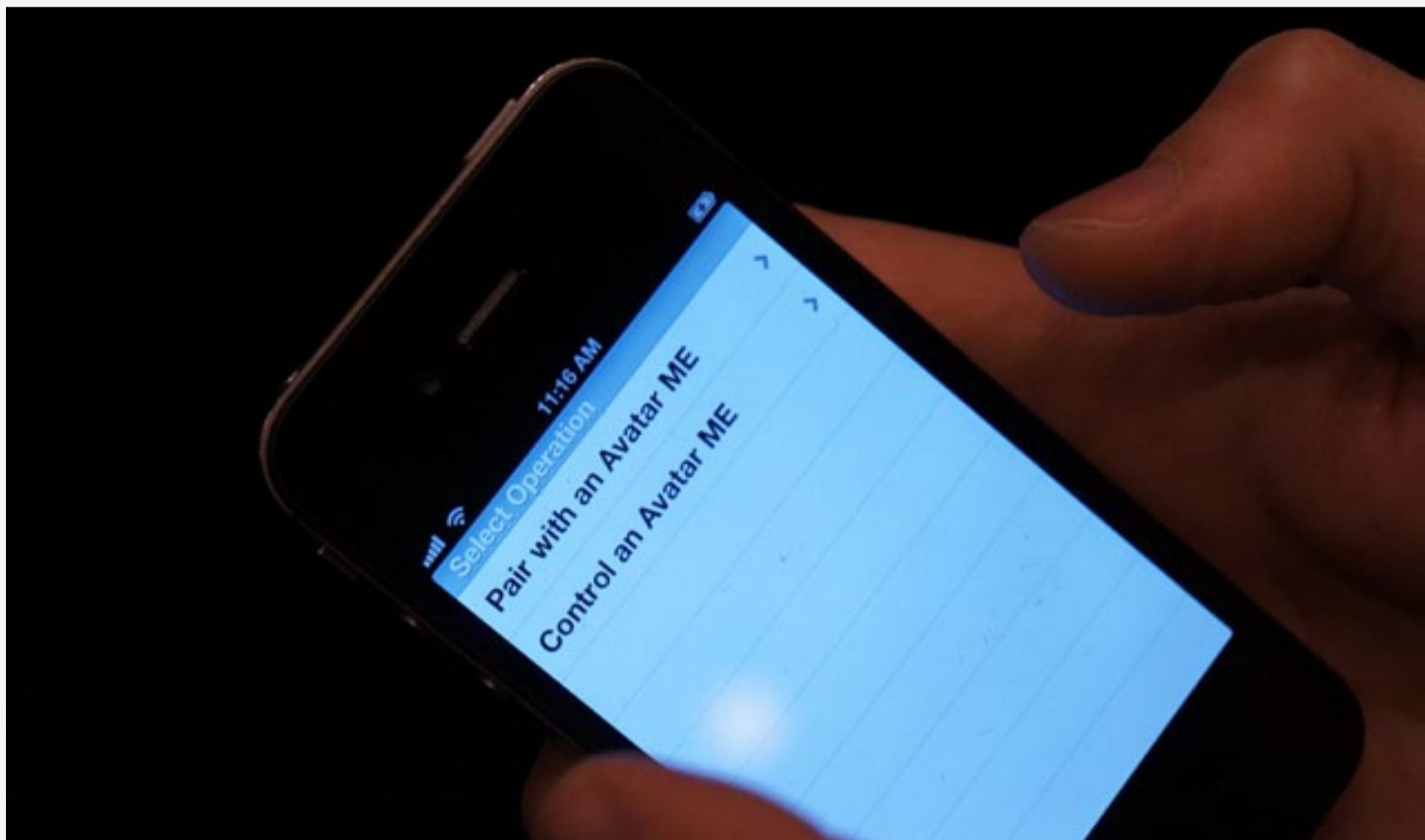
Unless you have loads of cash at your disposal or work for the federal government, chances are you haven't heard of RoboteX. The start-up, featured here at CES 2013's Eureka Alley, specializes in creating automated solutions for a variety of security applications (think: SWAT busts, radiation level monitoring, etc.). Traditionally, these high-end robotic solutions carry a price tag in the tens of thousands, but starting this week, RoboteX is targeting the consumer market with its Avatar. Set to retail for \$299, the blue tank-like bot links up with iOS devices (an Android version's coming in Q1) via USB to communicate with a companion app over Bluetooth 4.0 for remote moni-





01.09.2013

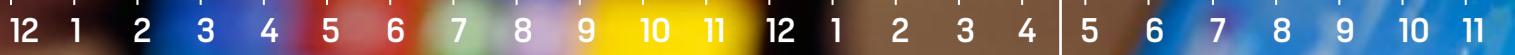
2:00PM



toring. In its current incarnation, the Avatar doesn't do much apart from offering telepresence — authenticated by the company's servers — but the robot has been designed to be open source. To that end an SDK and HDK will be made available allowing tinkerers to craft up their own innova-

tions. Unfortunately, due to the abundance of wireless signals here at the show, RoboteX's reps weren't able to get the Avatar up and moving around the floor. But in a typical home environment, users should expect to get up to an hour and a half of "driving" time out of the robot. — *Joseph Volpe*





PRICE
\$899 +

AVAILABILITY
TBD

**FIRST
IMPRESSION**
The Surface Pro is a clear (but weighty) step up from its Windows RT brother.

MICROSOFT SURFACE PRO

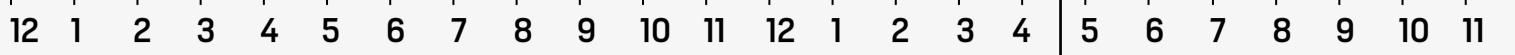


Microsoft didn't have a booth at CES this year, but it was on hand to show off the forthcoming Surface Pro along with the pressure-sensitive pen that goes with it.

In making the move from the Surface RT to the Surface Pro, we step up from 1,366 x 768 resolution to 1080p. Same 10.6-inch screen, just a lot more pixel density. And believe us when we say the difference is appreciable. In a side-by-side comparison with the RT, everything looked a little sharper, a little less pixelated. The "S" in the word "Start" on the Start screen, for instance, is thinner and less jagged than on the RT. It's a difference anyone can appreciate, even people who swear they're not display snobs.

Other than the resolution, though, the underlying technology is largely the same: this too is a ClearType screen with deep





01.09.2013

4:29PM



blacks and vibrant colors. Like the panel on the RT, it's optically bonded, meaning there's no space between the LCD and touch panel. As ever, that helps cut down on glare. That optical bonding has a second benefit: it helps make for a more natural pen experience. Unlike with other pen-enabled tablets, where you might see air pockets in between the screen layers, this actually comes close to matching what it feels like to write on paper. The screen, which makes use of modified Wacom technology, is also smart enough that if you run the pen across the screen without applying any pressure, no marks will show up; the algorithms can tell you didn't mean to write anything. Ditto for palm rejection. Additionally, you can flip the pen over and use it as an eraser, the way you would with a number 2 pencil. In OneNote, at least, the pen seems to be aware

of what you mean to erase.

As for the rest of the hardware, this is and is not like the Surface RT we reviewed last fall. It has the same magnesium VaporMg casing, as well as the same kickstand, neat clicking sound and all. It's also compatible with the same Touch and Type Covers as the Surface RT. Still, there's no getting around the fact that this thing is bulkier than its little brother: 13.5mm thick and about two pounds, compared with 9.4mm and around 1.5 pounds for the RT. And, of course, it has to be bigger: it has a Core i5 processor, two fans and a 42.5Wh battery, whereas the RT has a Tegra 3 chip, a 31Wh battery and no fans. You know what, though? Two pounds is still lighter than the Acer Iconia W700, which weighs 2.09 pounds, so for a product in this class, the Surface Pro might even pass for compact. Speaking of those fans, they're not very obvious. It's almost as if Microsoft realized "fans on a tablet" would have a negative connotation and went out of its way to make them discreet.

Performance from the Core i5 processor seemed zippy at first blush: apps close and open quickly, and transitions are smooth. Is it technically faster than other Core i5-powered Windows 8 hybrids? Only time and benchmarks will tell, we suppose. Suffice to say, it appears to perform about as well as other products. — *Dana Wollman*





01.09.2013

6:07PM

**PRICE**
TBD**AVAILABILITY**
Summer 2013**FIRST
IMPRESSION**
LG takes on the
wearable market
with a few new
tricks.

LG SMART ACTIVITY TRACKER

We've seen our fair share of wearable tech at CES already and LG is looking to cast its hat in the ring as well. A waltz through the company's booth revealed the Smart Activity Tracker: a device that rests comfortably on the wrist, much like the Nike+ FuelBand or the Jawbone Up. Despite sharing some aesthetic similarities with the former gadget — like a dotted LED display, USB clasp and soft-touch rubber coating — LG's model has a few more tricks up its sleeve. First, the Smart Activity Tracker is compatible with both iOS and Android using the Fitness Band app to track, monitor and share your fitness habits (no big surprise given LG's handsets run Google's OS).

As you might expect, the wearable touts Bluetooth for connecting to your smartphone and an accelerometer for



01.09.2013
6:07PM

tracking purposes. However, LG tacked on an altimeter for more accurate location data (the world isn't flat, you know) and the display can show call info during a run while also offering media controls for navigating through those playlists. Speaking of the display, this one is swipeable, allowing the user to cycle through without pressing a button repeatedly. Smart Activity Tracker bands will also sync with LG's smart TVs and fitness apps like *Let's Dance* to offer a workout from the comforts of your living room. Unfortunately, these aren't scheduled to arrive until sometime in the heat of summer, but when they do, there will be a few color options to suit those personal preferences. — *Mat Smith*



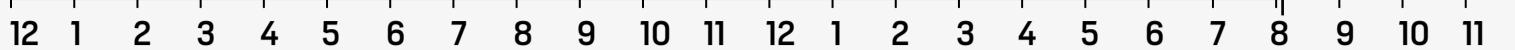
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01.09.2013
8:05PM09:21 PM
Wednesday, January 9**PRICE**
TBD**AVAILABILITY**
TBD**FIRST
IMPRESSION**
Nuance takes on the digital assistant with a cross-platform solution that has the potential to beat the big boys.

NUANCE WINTERMUTE

It's becoming increasingly clear that the next wave of mobile computing is going to be voice driven. Mobile assistants like Siri and Google Now are garnering plenty of media attention and earning legions of fans. Nuance, the company behind Dragon — often cited as the gold standard in voice recognition software — wants to make sure it doesn't get left behind after pioneering the art of speaking to your computer. Dragon Mobile Assistant was the first step towards that goal, but it stuck primarily to searches and a few simple tasks. After leaving our stage here at CES, the compa-





ny was nice enough to take us back to a suite where it demoed a project code-named Wintermute. Besides throwing a bone to William Gibson fans, the project aims to make Nuance's personal assistant truly personal and platform-agnostic by building a profile of individual users in the cloud.

While clearly very much in the early stages, what we saw was nonetheless impressive. The mobile app was able to easily recognize queries such as "what is the score of the Celtics game" and obey commands like "play music by The Rolling Stones." Nuance even threw in a bit of snide, Siri-like personality — the assistant quipped about the rep being too young to listen to The Stones. That response was obviously triggered by the fact that the app knew Sean Brown, a senior manager at the company, was born well after the band's heyday.

Where the cloud-based concept clearly shines however, is when you move between devices. Unlike Siri, which is tied to the mobile-only iOS, Wintermute knows you wherever you are. If you paused The Stones on your phone, you'd be able to pick right back up where you left off on your desktop or laptop, by simply telling Dragon Assistant to "play that song I was listening to." Things even carry over to your living room, thanks to Dragon TV. In the demo, Wintermute was told to

"throw on the game." After parsing the language, the system goes through a number of steps. It has to interpret the command and recognize that "throw on" means to put on the television and that "the game" refers to a sporting event. Then it looks at your online profile, sees that you recently performed a search for the Celtics score. Then it looks at the programing guide and, if the game is still going on, it tunes to that channel. And it does this at stunningly quick speeds.

Obviously, to build a truly personal assistant Nuance will need a vast database of information about you. Users can input certain information about themselves and it monitors searches and commands to build a history to mine. The company also says that it will be able to harvest data from content partners — with the user's permission, of course — to extend that well of information and identify habits and personal tastes. Clearly, though, Google has the leg up in the race to build such a database about most people, so Nuance has a tough road ahead of it. But, if it can deliver as seamless an experience as we saw in the demo in the real world and convince consumers of the value of a platform-agnostic approach, then Wintermute just might be what makes Nuance the name to beat in the virtual assistant field.

— Terrence O'Brien



CES FINAL PHASE: LOLCATS, MUTANTS AND THE SCENT OF STERNO

@bxchen

Just met with the new T-Mobile CEO, John Legere. Funny guy, like a hipper Steve Buscemi.

“The tech world is moving, but it’s not moving fast enough for me.”

Danny DeVito

Connecting to wired internet in the press room is like finding an oasis in the desert.
#2013CES

@Emily

CES evening events, where the scent of sterno-heated chafing dishes fill the air.

@nicole

@sean_cooper

Kind of disturbing that #CES has no recycling.

@mat

Accidentally touched my eye without first applying hand sanitizer. Likely going to die now. #2013CES

@LesHorn

Nine words to describe CES: They’re paying her to talk to you, you mutant.



Okay, Samsung doing an all-LOLcat keynote. GIVE THE PEOPLE WHAT THEY WANT.

@Mikelsaac

@Cato_of_Utica

The bone conduction earphones that Panasonic is putting out simultaneously intrigue and terrify me.

@davepell

I'm heading over the adult video convention next door to CES. That's where a few extra inches really makes a difference.

@KingKristoph23

Exynos 5... Lord have some mercy. #NerdRage

"Everybody's a drop-tester in the office."

Sifteo's Co-Founder **Dave Merrill**

"If you want a big picture from a very small device, that's what we're all about."

Texas Instruments'
Frank Moizio

"Occasionally my wife does say, 'Put the technology down so we can all have a conversation.' She usually loses that one."

ARM's President **Simon Segars**

"One in eight Americans, including children, are on some form of psychotropic drug."

Huffington Post's **Arianna Huffington**



**CES
2013**

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TIME MACHINES



CES1995

CES in the '90s saw consistent growth in the presence of personal computers on the show floor. During his premiere CES keynote in 1995, Microsoft's Bill Gates predicted a decade of dramatic advances for the PC and in 2013, keynote duties were passed to Paul Jacobs of Qualcomm, who had a similar perspective on the future of mobile.

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